

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	No. 1:22CR00060 MTS (ACL)
)	
CHRISTOPHER SCOTT PRITCHARD,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

DEFENDANT'S SENTENCING MEMORANDUM

1. Circumstances of the Offense

Since being charged with this crime, Chris has been consistent in his reasoning for setting fire to the church. He would like this sentencing memorandum to tell his side of the story.

Chris grew up in the Mormon Church. He was a parishioner in the Cape Girardeau Church for a time period during his childhood. His family were very active members.

Chris remembers his childhood vividly. He remembers his sisters and himself being abused by his father. His sisters were also sexually abused by other members of the church. The details of some of the abuse are outlined in PSR 47. The elders of the church were aware of these accusations. They never reported the abuse to the authorities. While they didn't allow Chris' dad to be around other children-they never protected him. The church hid the abuse.

Chris believes that this is a common occurrence in the church. He states that Mormon children have been, are being, and will be physically and sexually abused by parents and/ or other members of the church. Instead of helping the victims of these crimes, the elders are covering up the crimes. Chris compares this to the secrets of the Catholic Church that have been uncovered in recent times.

Uneducated in the law, Chris believed that his acts were justified and therefore he was not guilty of any crime (or a jury would not convict him of a crime). He continues to believe that his actions were justified, however understands (although doesn't agree with) that the law does not allow this justification as a defense to the crime he has committed. Chris maintains that he is a whistleblower to the corruption of the Mormon Church and that the fire is a symbolic destruction/ fall of the Church's sweeping this child abuse under the rug, but presently agrees that he is guilty of a crime.

However, he bemoans the fact that a trial will not occur. Specifically, he wants the media and the public to know the reasons for his arson and to know the bad acts of the Mormon Church. He wishes for his story and his reasoning to be told. With this guilty plea, his true intent has not been made public and therefore his actions were for naught.

Chris never intended to hurt anyone through this act. He only ever wanted to bring awareness to this issue.

2. Characteristics of the defendant

Chris has been diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder- which is a combination of schizophrenia and a mood disorder. The schizophrenia affects the way you think, act, and perceive reality. The mood disorder changes feelings, energy levels and behaviors. With this mood disorder, Chris experiences mania- several days of feeling very energetic with racing thoughts, a desire to participate in unsafe behaviors, agitation, and excessive talking.

This diagnosis not only contributed to the circumstances of the offense but also the way that this case has progressed in federal court. Chris had bad blood with the Mormon church from his childhood. And, his mental illness changed the way he would normally behave in dealing with these issues. And, as this court is aware, there have been multiple times wherein Chris could not participate in court proceedings because he was in a state of mania. He has been deemed incompetent to stand trial at times and competent other times.

Chris was 40 years old before he had any convictions for offenses. And, his only prior offenses were misdemeanors. Prior to that, Chris led a normal life. He was in the military, he was married, had children, and had a job.

He has never had the deterrent effect of a previous incarceration. This incarceration has not been easy for him either. Chris has spent most of his incarceration alone in a solitary cell with very limited communication with others.

Since he refuses to medicate, the jail believes that this is safer but it could be argued that the loneliness and solitude are exacerbating his mental illness.

Once released from any period of incarceration, he would be subject to up to 3 years of supervised release. Chris understands and agrees that a term of supervision is necessary for him. He is homeless and he is going to need assistance in obtaining a residence upon his release. He may need mental health treatment services upon his release. He is asking for a recommendation for placement in a medical facility in hopes to gain either medication that does not cause the ill effects of his previous prescriptions or counselling while in the BOP. He is hoping that with this placement his mental illness will be under control upon his release however he understands that these services need to be in place just in case.

For the reasons set forth in this sentencing memorandum and those listed in the Presentence Investigation Report, Mr. Pritchard is requesting a sentence at the low end of the agreed upon guideline range of 111 months. Counsel would submit that the sentence set forth is a sentence, sufficient but not greater than necessary, to promote respect for the law, provide just punishment, generally deter others, and specifically deter Mr. Pritchard from future misconduct.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Amanda L. Altman
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ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 15, 2025 the foregoing was filed electronically with the Clerk of the Court to be served by operation of the Court's electronic filing system upon the United States Attorney's Office.

/s/Amanda L. Altman

Amanda L. Altman